

**Washington, DC** – U.S. Congressman Ciro D. Rodriguez (TX-23) announced Wednesday that the 23<sup>rd</sup> Congressional District has received \$6.48 million in funding through the House Appropriations Committee for agriculture programs throughout the district.

“Agriculture and ranching are very much a part of our Texas tradition,” said Congressman Rodriguez, whose district stretches from San Antonio to El Paso and down to the U.S.-Mexico border. “Our district is fortunate to have significant natural resources and we want to protect these industries, which are a critical component of our economy.”

At Sul Ross State University in Alpine, \$1.434 million will go to a Sustainable Agriculture Water Conservation Project. The goal is to create a basin-wide management plan for the Rio Grande region, where water is a scarce commodity. Domestic, agricultural and industrial needs can be better met through wiser usage and planning.

Five projects through Texas A&M AgriLife, totaling \$5.05 million will receive funding. They include:

An efficient irrigation project that will provide training, education and technical assistance to agricultural producers, urban residents and municipal water system operators, teaching them about irrigation system efficiency - \$1.61 million

The Designing Foods for Health research program to develop fruits and vegetables that help ward off diseases. Such research is particularly relevant in Texas, which has some of the highest rates of obesity and overweight in the nation, which often lead to diseases like diabetes and hypertension - \$1.385 million

Irrigation research activities to cover all 31 Texas counties in the Rio Grande Basin watershed, which will provide training and technical assistance to agricultural producers, urban residents, irrigation district personnel, municipal water system operators, consulting engineers, irrigation district managers and others - \$1.16 million

Beef improvement research seeks to examine differences in the behavioral and physiological responses of cattle based on different types of feed. Knowledge gained from these studies, in

combination with educational programs will significantly reduce feed input costs as well as the environmental impacts of beef production systems - \$693,000

Wool research project with scientists in Wyoming, Montana and New Mexico to develop a fine-wool sheep capable of producing significantly finer and more valuable wool that is well-adapted to western ranges in the United States. Project will provide technological support for projects designed to increase profitability of sheep and goat enterprises and improve productivity and safety of western rangelands - \$206,000

Dr. Ron Lacewell of AgriLife commended Congressman Rodriguez for his support of agricultural initiatives in the district. "He has shown real leadership and is doing the things that matter for the whole state of Texas," he said.

Congressman Rodriguez has been a strong advocate for ranching and farming communities in the 23<sup>rd</sup> Congressional District. In FY09, he secured \$6.48 million in funding for these projects.

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